

School code: _____ Interviewer: _____
Interviewee Title: _____

DISTRICT OFFICIAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Please tell me a little about yourself and your relationship with the school.

[Probes: How long have you been with the district? How long have you been at the central office? What previous positions did you hold in this district or in other districts?]

2. We are examining efforts to improve student achievement over the past five years. Are you aware of any improvements in student achievement in the last five years? What do you think accounts for this improvement?

[Probes for turnaround school: Did the district intentionally seek to turn the school around? If so, what steps did the district take to make changes in practices at the school? Was there a change in leadership or staff? Did the district provide staff development for teachers, change curriculum, engage external assistance? When? Did the district set specific expectations? Timeframe for improvement?]

[Probes for comparison school: Did the district intentionally target this school for improvement efforts? If so, what steps did the district take to make changes in practices at the school? Was there a change in leadership or staff? Did the district provide staff development for teachers, change curriculum, engage external assistance? When? Did the district set specific expectations? Timeframe for improvement?]

3. What actions has the principal taken to improve the school? When were these actions taken? To what extent did the central office drive these actions? Teachers? Parents? Community members?

[Probes: Does the principal have autonomy in hiring, budgeting, and curriculum decisions? Same or different from other schools in the district? If yes, has the level of autonomy changed over time?]

4. How well did the actions fit with district policies? Did any conflict with district policies and practices? If so, how did the principal act in the conflict? The central office? Were any waivers to district policies granted? To the union contract?

5. Did the district monitor progress toward meeting student achievement goals differently for this school from how it monitors other schools? If so, please describe the differences.

[Probes: Is more intense attention paid to this school? If so, how is that intensity shown?] Does it still monitor progress differently?

6. **What support did the district provide to the school to encourage change in student achievement? What supports are in place to ensure continuous improvement? Do these differ from supports provided to other schools in the district? If so, what is the rationale for the difference?**

[Probes: Support such as extra staff, targeted financial resources, additional fiscal resources, policy changes, assistance from external agencies? Rationale such as to stimulate change? To reward positive outcomes?]

7. **Have successes, challenges, or failures in the efforts to stimulate high student achievement been documented? If so, how is the documentation used? What data are used to document the successes, challenges, and failures?**

[Probes: Are successes celebrated? If so, how? Are failures used to change policies and practices?]

8. **Have there been any changes to school leadership in the last five years? If so, what led to the personnel change? What were the qualities seen in the current principal that made you (or others in the central office) think he/she was an appropriate person for the job?**
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9. **Have the school's goals or plan to achieve the goals changed over the last five years? If so, how? What was the rationale for the change(s)?**

[Probes: Challenges in implementing the original plan, changes in state or district policies, focus on new priorities because of the successes in the first area(s) of focus.]

[Probe for turnaround schools: Have the goals or plans change in light of improvements in achievement over time?]

10. **How much staff turnover has there been in the school? Why have staff members left?**
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11. **Is there anything else I should know to tell the story of the school's improvement efforts?**
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